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UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

Recommendation by the Executive Director  
Assistance to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic  
Support for a comprehensive population programme

Proposed UNFPA assistance:	\$10 million
Estimated value of Government's contribution:	To be determined
Duration:	Five years
Estimated starting date:	January 1990
Executing agencies:	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Health Organization (WHO) United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Government co-ordinating agency:	State Planning Commission

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SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Demographic facts

Population Total (000)		Population density (/sq.km.) . . . . .	68
Total . . . . .	12,501	Average annual change (000)	
Males . . . . .	6,325	Population increase . . . . .	481
Females . . . . .	6,176	Births . . . . .	571
Sex ratio (/100 females) . . . . .	102.4	Deaths . . . . .	79
Urban . . . . .	6,479	Net migration . . . . .	-11
Rural . . . . .	6,022	Annual population total (% growth) . . . . .	3.52
Per cent urban . . . . .	51.8	urban . . . . .	4.53
Population in year 2000 (000) . . . . .	17,611	rural . . . . .	2.37
Functional age groups (%)		Crude birth rate (/1000) . . . . .	41.7
Young child: 0-4 . . . . .	19.1	Crude death rate (/1000) . . . . .	5.7
Child: 5-14 . . . . .	29.0	Net migration rate (/1000) . . . . .	-0.9
Youth: 15-24 . . . . .	19.3	Total fertility rate (/woman) . . . . .	6.25
Elderly: 60+ . . . . .	4.2	Gross reproduction rate (/woman) . . . . .	3.05
65+ . . . . .	2.6	Net reproduction rate (/woman) . . . . .	2.83
Women: 15-49 . . . . .	21.4	Infant mortality rate (/1000) . . . . .	39
Median age (years) . . . . .	15.9	Life expectancy at birth (years)	
Dependency ratios: total . . . . .	102.8	Males . . . . .	65.2
(/100) Aged 0-14 . . . . .	97.5	Females . . . . .	69.2
Aged 65+ . . . . .	5.3	Both sexes . . . . .	67.2
Agricultural population density		GNP per capita	
(/hectare of arable land) . . . . .	0.51	(U.S. dollars, 1987) . . . . .	1,640

Sources: Population density on arable land is derived from two publications issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: FAO Production Yearbook 1985 and World-wide Estimates and Projections of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Population Segments 1950-2025, ESS/MIS/86/2; gross national production per capita: World Bank, World Development Report 1989. Figures for population, total population by sex, population by age group, age indicators, urban-rural population, and population density (/sq. km.) refer to the year 1990; figures for average annual change, rate of annual change, and fertility and mortality are the five-year averages for 1990-1995. These data are from the Population Division, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, World population prospects: 1988.

## I. SUMMARY

1. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) proposes to support a comprehensive programme in the amount of \$10 million over a five-year period, starting January 1990, to assist the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in achieving its population and development objectives. The proposed country programme, UNFPA's fourth cycle of assistance to the country, is based on the findings and recommendations of a multi-sectoral Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) Mission which visited the Syrian Arab Republic from 16 September to 14 October 1989. It would coincide with the Government's seventh five-year national plan (1991-1995), which, among other things, aims at integrating population factors into socio-economic development planning.

2. The programme would supplement and complement the Government's programme aimed at increasing the knowledge of the interaction between demographic and socio-economic factors and at enhancing the country's institutional capacity for developing a comprehensive population policy. The main goals of the UNFPA programme would be: (a) to assist in the formulation of a national population policy and the integration of population factors into development planning through the strengthening of the National Population Committee, a high-level permanent committee responsible for population activities in the country, headed by the Minister of the State Planning Commission (SPC); (b) to expand maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) services on a nation-wide basis to reduce the total fertility rate (TFR) from its current level of 6.25 children per woman to 4.92 by the year 2000, with special emphasis on improving the country's MCH/FP management information system (MIS); (c) to integrate population education into technical and vocational education and agricultural extension programmes, and to establish a specialized population communication and information centre; (d) to intensify the integration of women into economic development; and (e) to improve population data collection and analysis.

3. All projects under the proposed programme, as in all UNFPA-assisted programmes, would be undertaken in accordance with the principles and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action; that is, that population policies should be consistent with internationally and nationally recognized human rights of individual freedom, justice and the survival of national, regional and minority groups (para. 14 (d)); that respect for human life is basic to all human societies (para. 14 (e)); and that all couples and individuals have the basic right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, and to have the information, education and means to do so (para. 14 (f)).

## II. BACKGROUND

4. Although the Syrian Arab Republic does not yet have a comprehensive population policy, statements of Syrian government officials indicate a high awareness of the need to integrate population variables into development plans.

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In his message to the International Conference on Population, held in Mexico City in 1984, His Excellency President Hafez Al-Assad acknowledged that "the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic tried to solve the population problem through the integration of demographic variables into socio-economic development and dealing with population as an integral part of development planning on both the general and specific levels.... Socio-economic policy is expected to lead to several changes in demographic indicators in the near future. It will correct spatial distribution and eliminate unequal distribution of population among agricultural and other economic and social fields. On the other hand, the great improvement expected in education, especially for females, will affect fertility rates, and will result in the decline of annual population growth rates."

5. The Syrian Arab Republic faces the problems of rapid population growth, a high dependency ratio, uneven distribution of the population and other problems related to internal migration. According to government projections, the observed annual growth rate of population was 3.28 per cent for the period 1960-1970 and 3.35 per cent for 1970-1981. United Nations projections for 1990 estimate the population at 12.5 million and growing at the rate of 3.5 per cent annually. The crude birth rate is estimated at 41.7 per 1,000 population and the crude death rate at 5.7 per 1,000. Moreover, 48 per cent of the population is below 15 years of age. The increase in recent years in the proportion of young children and in the number of people aged 65 years and older has led to very high dependency ratio, which is currently estimated at 102.8 per cent. These problems have been compounded by the uneven distribution of the population, which has been greatly influenced by people's quest for work and for available sources of water. Population density varies widely throughout the country, ranging from a high of 239 people per square kilometre in the western region to a low of 30 per square kilometre in the central area.

6. The negative impact of the demographic situation on the country's economic and social development has become obvious. As a result, the Syrian Arab Republic is confronting serious problems in the fields of employment, education, nutrition and health care. At the current pace, the country's population will nearly double in 20 years, and then reach 32.3 million by the year 2025, according to United Nations estimates. The composition of the population is young and the fertility rate is high (estimated at 6.25 children per woman for the period 1985-1990), the combination of which will increase the dependency ratio year by year. A steady migration of rural people to the five major cities -- Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Hamma, and Latakia -- has contributed to an increase in the urban growth rate to 4.1 per cent per annum, which has in turn heightened pressure on already limited resources. This migration in pursuit of employment has, among other things, created an imbalance in the age structure in the rural areas. Other factors aggravating the country's population problems include the limited involvement of women in the development process and high illiteracy and school drop-out rates, particularly among women.

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7. Several important events that have taken place since 1970 have adversely affected the Syrian Arab Republic's economy. For one thing, the 1973 war disrupted all public sector investments, such that the public sector share in total investments decreased from 71 per cent in 1970 to 51 per cent in 1987. For another, the stagnation of bilateral aid in the early 1980s and the burden of interest payments on foreign loans for financing development projects, coupled with a combination of low agricultural yields and inflationary pressures, led to a serious deterioration of the economy. The combined effect of a deteriorating economic situation and an increasingly problematic demographic situation has impressed on the Government the urgent need to integrate population variables into its development planning and to facilitate the implementation of the programme proposed by UNFPA.

8. In the Syrian Arab Republic, formal development planning in the form of five-year plans has been practiced since 1961. It was only with the country's fourth development plan (1976-1980), however, that demographic variables were included among the various sets of information used to formulate the plan. The fifth five-year plan (1981-1985) included population needs among its principal objectives, incorporating population concerns in its efforts to develop health care and education and to bolster the activities of popular volunteer organizations, such as the Workers' Trade Union, the Women's Union, and the Adult and Youth Unions. The fifth plan also focused on strengthening the Central Bureau of Statistics and the State Planning Commission as well as civil registration in general. The draft sixth five-year plan (1986-1990), which was prepared within the framework of long-term objectives to the year 2000, focused on developing human resources and on improving and expanding community and social services, among other things.

9. In formulating the 1991-1995 socio-economic development plan, a primary concern of planners was to create a balance between the supply and demand of employment, on the one hand, and to curb rural-to-urban migration on the other. To achieve these objectives, the State Planning Commission, among other strategies, emphasizes compulsory education for males and females up to the secondary level (9th grade), reform of the educational system, expansion of vocational training, and the increased participation of women in economic development. Supporting inputs include information, education and communication (IEC) activities, family planning services and agricultural reform. Government planners expect these measures to have a significant impact on the country's demographic situation, including an increase in the average age at first marriage for females and a reduction of the total fertility rate. To help curb rural-to-urban migration, the Government will seek to enhance the attractiveness of rural living by adopting measures such as agricultural reform, expansion of agro-industry, improvement of animal husbandry, development of existing rural industry and introduction of new industry, as well as the continued improvement of social services in rural areas.

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### III. REVIEW OF UNFPA AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DATE

10. UNFPA's assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic began in the 1970s, with support to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) in connection with the analysis of data from the 1970 population and housing census, and continued with the establishment of a Centre for Population Studies and Research. Such assistance was extended on a project-by-project basis until 1975.

11. Beginning in 1976, the Governing Council approved a UNFPA programme of assistance in the amount of \$3 million for a period of four years (1976-1979). The first programme included support for the population research programme at the CBS, demographic data studies and analysis undertaken by the Directorate of Population and Manpower Planning of the State Planning Commission, a demographic teaching and research programme at the University of Aleppo and a study of the country's civil registration system. The objective of the first programme included: (a) the expansion and upgrading of basic health services, including MCH/FP services, through the development of a national MCH/FP demonstration and training centre in Damascus; (b) extension of MCH/FP services to other urban areas and to selected rural areas; and (c) strengthening of the population activities of the Women's Union.

12. On the basis of the findings and recommendations of the Basic Needs Assessment Mission that visited the Syrian Arab Republic in December 1979-January 1980, a second UNFPA-assisted programme in the amount of \$9 million was approved by the Governing Council in June 1981 for the five-year period 1981-1985. The second programme expanded and consolidated some aspects of the first programme cycle. The activities undertaken were: (a) the strengthening and expansion of maternal and child health care, including training of health care personnel in preventive and community aspects of health care; (b) the conduct of the housing and population census of 1981; (c) the undertaking of training and research in population issues in the State Planning Commission; (d) the promotion of awareness among policy-makers of the relationship between population and development; (e) the introduction of population education in the formal school system and training in the production of materials for incorporating population education into the non-formal sector; and (f) the strengthening of government machinery to facilitate the implementation of policies concerning the improvement of the status of women.

13. Based on the recommendations of a Basic Needs Assessment Update Mission of March 1985, a third UNFPA-assisted programme (1986-1989) was approved by the Governing Council in June 1986 in the amount of \$4 million. The Government, confirming its interest and support to the programme, contributed \$800,000 to ensure the implementation of the proposed activities. The third programme was a continuation of the second programme, but with stronger emphasis on strengthening and expanding maternal and child health and family planning services on a nation-wide basis; generating data for the purposes of social and

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economic development planning; increasing planners' knowledge of the interaction between demographic and socio-economic factors; and increasing the degree of awareness among policy-makers concerning the implications of population growth. New areas were given more attention during the programme such as population IEC; in-school population education; and integration of population awareness in adult literacy curricula.

#### Maternal and child health and family planning

14. The UNFPA-supported MCH/FP programme was quite successful. Under the programme, UNFPA was able to extend MCH/FP services progressively from a central-level pilot demonstration clinic in Damascus to a decentralized and extensive national network. Health care services were delivered through a system that now includes 351 urban and rural health centres, with family planning services offered in half of them. The success of the new family planning services was facilitated by the organization of health education activities, the recognition and acceptance by the Government of child-spacing as part of the health strategy, and the support of training of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) through itinerant training teams visiting various provinces periodically.

15. Because of the training of the TBAs in safe delivery of family planning and contraceptive methods and their exposure to the health benefits of family planning, statistics show that the number of acceptors increased by 30 per cent between 1986 and 1988, from 271,383 in 1986 to 289,428 in 1987 to 351,531 in 1988. Nearly 28 per cent of the new acceptors requested birth control pills. In this respect, efforts are being made to shift to safer, more effective methods, at the same time providing a wider choice of methods so as to decrease reliance on oral contraceptives. The current strategies of family planning programmes include consultation with local leaders, increased utilization of TBAs and working with a wide variety of organizations such as women's and youth groups and through literacy and agricultural extension programmes.

16. Despite its many accomplishments, the programme did encounter some difficulties. Study tours and fellowships were delayed because of difficulties in determining where to send the fellows and whether their language ability was adequate for such training. The weakness of the programme was revealed in the insufficient attention paid to the managerial process and in the ineffectiveness of the MCH/FP management information system, which was poorly organized and thus inefficient. There was also a significant delay in the implementation of the post-partum and maternity-centred family planning programme in the Faculty of Medicine of Damascus University. This was due primarily to a change in the project's National Director and to a plan which did not adequately describe the intended activities and the institutional modalities of collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education in overseeing university hospitals. As a result, little progress was made to improve obstetrical and neo-natal care in provincial hospitals.

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Information, education and communication

17. The population education programme succeeded in placing great emphasis on introducing and strengthening population education in the formal and non-formal school system and in developing awareness among educators and the younger generation of the relationship between high population growth and socio-economic development. Government support to this programme was strong, as was evidenced by the implementation of several parallel population activities to complement the activities in the plan of action of the UNFPA-funded programme. These parallel activities included the publication of a regular population newsletter, the broadcast of a regular half-hour programme on population issues as an integral part of the educational television programme, and the dissemination of the results of population seminars and/or programmes to all the provinces and districts so that educators could benefit from such information.

18. However, a delay in the implementation of these activities was caused by the absence and/or frequent change of a full-time project director, as well as difficulties in identifying qualified and available consultants in population education in the Arab region to assist in finalizing the curricular materials such as national source books and teachers' training guides. Moreover, the efforts to introduce population education into the programme designed to eradicate illiteracy throughout the country encountered several serious constraints including the shortage of funds and a prevailing tradition against the enrolment of women in literacy classes. Nor was population education incorporated effectively into the curricula of technical and vocational schools and agricultural extension programmes.

19. In the information and communication area, UNFPA assistance started only in 1988. A core unit within the radio and television establishment is responsible for programmes concerned with health and family planning. The orientation of such programmes has, so far, generally been on birth spacing, breast-feeding and the use of birth control pills. However, the unit has been unable to convey in its programmes the connection between rapid population growth and quality of life.

20. In general, shortages of skilled personnel, material resources and adequate baseline data on media target groups and exposure have impeded the development of high quality IEC materials and programmes. The task of communicators has been made all the more difficult because of a shortage of data on the socio-cultural background of family planning target groups, as well as inhibitions surrounding reproductive behaviour, changes in sex roles, and improvements in the status of women and related issues.

Basic data collection and analysis

21. In the areas of population data collection and analysis, UNFPA assistance has been particularly relevant to the needs of the country. The generation of

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data through the 1970 census was used primarily for awareness creation. Later, population data were used for analytical studies and specialized research. A set of guidelines and principal directives in the field of population was based on the findings and conclusions of a series of research studies on such topics as internal migration; labour force participation; population growth, structure and distribution; and health and nutrition, among others. After reviewing some of these analytical studies and research papers, the UNFPA mission noted the good quality of these documents. Yet, there was a considerable time lag between the collection and analysis of data. This was due generally to the limited ability of the staff responsible for data processing.

#### Population policy formulation

22. Although the basic elements of the institutional framework for the formulation of population policy exist in the Syrian Arab Republic, little progress has been made in this area. This is due in large part to the lack of co-ordination and absence of linkage among the organizations involved. The link between data users and operational procedures in the Syrian Arab Republic is good, and the Population Unit in the Ministry of State Planning Commission has been upgraded to the status of Directorate to enable it to maintain and expand contacts with all sectors. Also, training has generally benefited members of sectoral population units, although at times to the exclusion of staff of other ministries. Hence, the goal of strengthening the institutional capability of the Population Unit was not adequately accomplished. This was due to the fact that few training programmes had components specifically designed to strengthen the capabilities of the planners in the other sectors or to increase planners' understanding of the interrelationship between population and development.

#### Other external assistance

23. Among those organizations active in the Syrian Arab Republic in the field of population, either directly or indirectly, are the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). There is no bilateral assistance for population activities in the country.

24. WFP has expressed a keen interest in developing close co-ordination with UNFPA and incorporating population concerns, such as family planning and population education, into its agricultural extension programme. WFP has also emphasized the need to strengthen the co-ordination among existing United Nations agencies in the country.

25. UNICEF assistance for the period 1982-1984 totalled nearly \$1.5 million. Although UNICEF is engaged in such activities as immunization, oral rehydration therapy, the promotion of breast-feeding and the training of TBAs, birth spacing is given only cursory attention as a method of protecting children. Moreover,

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there is no mention in programme documents of the interrelationship between population growth and its consequences on the welfare of the family and the society at large.

26. WHO's assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic from 1986 through 1989 averaged approximately \$1 million per year. The approved budget for the 1990-1991 biennium is \$2,279,800, to be used to support 21 projects dealing with health system infrastructure, science and technology, health promotion and health care, and disease prevention and control.

27. IPPF provides assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic through its affiliate organization, the Syrian Family Planning Association (SFPA). SFPA has now clearly identified its role as being complementary to the work of the Ministry of Health in the field of family planning and family health. The emphasis is on clinical service delivery and information/education activities. Information and education work is carried out through the production of educational materials and the use of mass media such as radio and film shows.

#### IV. PROPOSED PROGRAMME 1990-1994

28. The proposed UNFPA programme is based on an analysis of the country's population situation, the experiences of UNFPA's first three population programmes, and the findings and recommendations of the PRSD mission, which were officially endorsed by the Government. The strategy of the proposed programme, which has been designed to supplement and complement the national population programme and which reflects the concern of the Government to reduce population growth and improve the health of mothers and children through the reduction of fertility, would include: (a) enhancing awareness and creating a favourable attitude towards smaller family size through well-designed IEC activities; (b) meeting the demand created for family planning services; and (c) providing a wide range of safe and effective contraceptives.

29. The programme would also support the State Planning Commission (SPC) and the National Population Committee (NPC) in developing comprehensive, integrated multi-sectoral population policies. This would require incorporating inputs from other ministries, as well as governmental and non-governmental agencies. To do this effectively, the SPC and NPC must strengthen the institutional framework of the various organizations involved in population and development activities in the country. Within the framework of the national population policy, the strategy for IEC would be to develop a comprehensive, integrated programme which would include population education in the curricula of primary and secondary schools, as well as in technical, vocational, adult literacy, and agricultural extension programmes. This would be supported by information and communication strategies aimed at slowing down population growth and creating awareness of the interrelationship between population and development.

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30. The PRSD mission recommended that the Government concentrate its population programme in the following sectors (in order of priority): policy development; MCH/FP, including an MIS component; information, education and communication; population dynamics; women, population and development; and data collection and analysis.

31. The UNFPA fourth programme of assistance would be implemented by various government agencies. The main goals and objectives of the programme would be: (a) to assist with the formulation of a national population policy and the integration of population variables into development planning; (b) to strengthen the country's overall institutional capacity and capability in the area of development planning; (c) to continue to support the expansion and diversification of family planning services to all health centres and maternity hospitals, emphasizing a community-participation approach, in order to increase contraceptive prevalence and to help reduce the total fertility rate; (d) to strengthen the administration and management of the MCH/FP programme and to improve the family planning management information system; (e) to continue to integrate population education into the curricula of secondary schools and to start introducing population education in technical and vocational education and in all educational activities for agricultural extension workers; (f) to support the establishment of a specialized population communication and information centre in the Ministry of Information; (g) to intensify the integration of women into economic development; and (h) to improve the accuracy and timely release of population data.

#### Maternal and child health and family planning

32. UNFPA would help the Government to expand and strengthen MCH/FP services on a nation-wide basis in order to increase contraceptive prevalence to a point where the total fertility rate will decrease from its current level of 6.25 children per woman to 5.41 by 1994 and to 4.92 in the year 2000. This would require, among other things, the strengthening of institutions and the development of human resources in the MCH/FP sector, as well as the extension of the service delivery infrastructure.

33. UNFPA would assist the Ministry of Health in its efforts to create district health centres as an intermediate-care level between the provincial hospital and peripheral services. The latter would be extended by utilizing traditional birth attendants as outreach workers within the framework of the public health centres. Furthermore, this activity would include a module for in-service training for the staff of the 351 health centres operated by the Ministry of Health to improve their capability in delivering quality MCH/FP services. Assistance would also include the provision of medical and clinical equipment to these centres, transport to ensure mobility of services, and adequate supervision.

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34. UNFPA would provide support to strengthen the administration and management of the MCH/FP programme and improve the MCH/FP management information system. This would require a complete assessment of the MIS system so as to determine its capabilities and needs. The system would then be upgraded accordingly and operated by specialists capable of supervising the collection of data, analyzing the data collected and adapting these data according to the system of decentralized target-setting. The management process would be improved and guided by the systematic use of well-conceived surveys on such indicators as contraceptive prevalence, continuation rate, and knowledge, attitude, and practice and (KAP).

35. Other areas of concern would be increasing the supply of contraceptives and upgrading the logistics for the family planning programme. Reaching the fertility targets set for 1994 and for the year 2000 presupposes the availability and regular flow of contraceptive supplies nation-wide. In order to achieve the required shift towards more effective contraceptive methods, it is estimated that \$2.8 million would be needed to provide the contraceptives, including the introduction of NORPLANT and injectables, among others, as well as the training for staff.

36. The IEC Unit in the MCH/FP Directorate would require assistance in its efforts to strengthen the monitoring of the IEC activities, and to pre-test health education materials and evaluate their effectiveness. Also, under the proposed programme, the prenatal and family planning services initiated at the University of Damascus would be enhanced and extended to the obstetrics and gynaecology (OB-GYN) departments in the hospitals of the medical schools of Damascus, Aleppo and Latakia Universities. Indeed, improving maternal and family planning services within the framework of safe motherhood would necessitate a strengthening of the teaching and research capabilities of the OB-GYN departments, as well as an involvement of the universities in the technical support of maternity services at the provincial level.

37. For the activities in the MCH/FP sector, UNFPA proposes to provide \$6 million. This would cover equipment, teaching aids, training, fellowships, short-term consultancies, and vehicles. The various activities would be implemented by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Higher Education and executed by WHO and UNFPA.

#### Information, education and communication

38. UNFPA would support the introduction and extension of population education at various levels of the formal and non-formal educational system including vocational training institutions and agricultural extension services. The proposed assistance would also support the implementation of nation-wide communication and information programmes as well as the establishment of a national population information centre in the Ministry of Information.

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39. Activities in support of formal and non-formal population education would include: (a) extension of population education to technical and vocational institutes as well as the continuation of population education in the primary and secondary school systems; (b) extension of population awareness to adult literacy and social education programmes; (c) integration of population education as well as population dynamics and family planning into the curricula at the Faculties of Medicine at Damascus and Aleppo Universities; and (d) introduction of population education into agricultural extension services.

40. In the communication sector, the recommended activities would be: (a) support for the establishment of a national population information centre at the Ministry of Information; and (b) strengthening of the Documentation Unit in the Syrian Parliament. The primary responsibility of the newly created National Population Information Centre, in addition to co-ordinating population information programmes and activities at the Ministry of Information, would be to develop a national strategy for population and related issues; to evaluate, improve and upgrade the different mass media programmes with a view to strengthening awareness creation; and to make use of different channels of communication to disseminate information about population education and related issues with the aim of increasing Syrians' acceptance of the small family norm.

41. UNFPA proposes to provide \$1.3 million to cover international consultancy services, training, equipment, administrative support, and the provision and publication of textbooks, in particular teacher training guides and resource books. The Ministries of Education, of Higher Education, of Information and of Culture would be responsible for implementing the various components of the IEC programme. UNESCO, FAO, WHO, and UNFPA would serve as executing agencies as and when appropriate.

#### Basic data collection and analysis

42. UNFPA would assist the Government in improving the quality of population data and ensuring its timely dissemination. Such data would provide government officials and development planners with a valuable base of information for formulating policies, integrating population variables into development planning, and monitoring, evaluating and analyzing the implementation of population policies, programmes and activities. Special attention would be given to the development of sound procedures for the collection, analysis, evaluation and dissemination of population data, including various aspects of fertility determinants as well as family planning service statistics. The following activities would also be supported in this sector: (a) collection of basic population data including preparations for and the conduct of the 1991 Population and Housing Census; (b) improvement of the system of vital statistics; (c) the undertaking of a sample survey on aspects of fertility determinants as well as family planning service statistics; (d) development and management of a population database; (e) provision of technical assistance for analysis and publication of census results; and (f) improvement of civil registration on a pilot scale.

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43. UNFPA would provide \$900,000 to this sector covering training, equipment, and publication of census and survey results. The State Planning Commission and the Central Bureau of Statistics would implement the activities. The United Nations and UNFPA would serve as executing agencies as and when appropriate.

#### Population policy formulation

44. In line with the expressed concern of the Government, UNFPA accords high priority to the formulation of a national population policy. The proposed UNFPA assistance would seek to strengthen the capability of the National Population Committee within the State Planning Commission, which is chaired by the Minister of Planning. The overall institutional capacities of the Directorate for Population Planning and Manpower and the Directorate of Scientific and Technical Co-operation, which will serve respectively as technical office and secretariat of the National Population Committee, would be strengthened in order to help the Government formulate and implement a national population policy. One of the primary aims of UNFPA assistance to this sector would be to enable the State Planning Commission and the National Population Committee to develop a comprehensive, integrated multi-sectoral population policy with quantifiable objectives and targets. The SPC would be the focal agency responsible for guiding the development and co-ordination of policy and for monitoring and evaluating the policy and programmes.

45. UNFPA's assistance to this sector would be \$500,000 to cover the cost of international consultants, training, equipment, and administrative support, among other things. The State Planning Commission and the National Population Committee would implement this component of the programme, with the United Nations serving as the executing agency.

#### Population dynamics

46. UNFPA assistance to this sector would focus on introducing instruction on the interrelationship between population and development at the university level. The primary objective would be to expose graduates, many of whom will staff various sectoral ministries, to the complex relationship between population and development issues. UNFPA proposes assistance in the amount of \$300,000 to cover the costs of introducing such activities at the Universities of Damascus and Aleppo. The Ministry of Higher Education and the Universities of Damascus and Aleppo would implement this component, with the United Nations serving as executing agency.

#### Women, population and development

47. UNFPA would assist the Syrian Government in its efforts to improve the status and condition of Syrian women, as stipulated in the national development plan. UNFPA would support special activities for enhancing the status of women such as: (a) undertaking research in support of policy formulation; (b)

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strengthening the capability of women's organizations to plan, monitor and evaluate women's projects; and (c) supporting income-generating activities specially designed to meet the needs of women. UNFPA proposes to provide \$700,000 to cover this sector. Appropriate institutions such as the Women's Union would be responsible for implementing the various activities. UNESCO, the ILO and FAO would serve as executing agencies.

Programme reserve

48. A reserve of \$300,000 would be set aside to meet unforeseen needs that may arise during the period of the programme (1990-1994).

Programme co-ordination

49. The Directorate of International Co-operation at the State Planning Commission is responsible for mobilizing and co-ordinating all external assistance to the country. With regard to UNICEF and the World Food Programme, the directors of the respective programmes in the Syrian Arab Republic have expressed an interest in developing a close co-ordination of inputs and activities with UNFPA. For its part, WFP has recommended incorporating population concerns into the agricultural extension programmes it supports.

Programme monitoring, evaluation and management

50. In addition to the standard monitoring and evaluation procedures, which include project progress reports, field monitoring visits, tripartite reviews, and a mid-term review, all projects would also have built-in monitoring and evaluation components. The major projects would be evaluated independently, usually at the mid-point of the programme.

51. On the part of UNFPA, since there is no UNFPA Country Director in the Syrian Arab Republic, the proposed programme would initially be managed by a National Programme Officer, who would be assisted by a secretary. The UNDP Resident Representative, who also serves as the UNFPA Representative, would provide guidance and promote co-ordination with other United Nations agencies. In view of the importance of the proposed programme, UNFPA is considering strengthening its field office with the recruitment of additional staff, as may be required.

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Financial summary

52. As indicated in paragraph 1, UNFPA proposes a programme in the amount of \$10 million for period 1990-1994. The breakdown by sector is as follows:

	UNFPA regular <u>resources</u>
	\$
Maternal and child health and family planning	6,000,000
Information, education and communication	1,300,000
Data collection and analysis	900,000
Population policy formulation	500,000
Population dynamics	300,000
Women, population and development	700,000
Programme reserve	300,000
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TOTAL	10,000,000

V. RECOMMENDATION

53. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the programme for the Syrian Arab Republic in the amount of \$10 million for the five-year period 1990-1994;

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to allocate the funds and to make appropriate arrangements with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and with the executing agencies.

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